



CITY OF BLOOMINGTON COMMISSION ON SUSTAINABILITY

Minutes

Tuesday, December 10, 2024, 6:00 p.m.
McCloskey Conference Room — City Hall

1. **Call to Order:** Justin Vasel called the meeting to order at 6:02 PM.

He noted that there is a busy agenda and hard stop at 7:30, so routine business would be conducted without objection whenever possible. Justin also asked Commissioners to be cognizant of staying on topic during discussions, and limiting comments and questions to those that will be useful for decision-making.

2. **Roll Call**

Members present: Justin Vasel, Zero Rose, Tara Dunderdale, Dave Rollo, Jamie Scholl, Evan Nix (virtual), Quentin Gilly, Hunter Hawley, Matt Austin

Members absent: David Maener, Andrew Guenther, Jon Eldon

City staff present: Shawn Miya, Jolie Perry

3. **Approval of Agenda**

ACTION: Justin suggested moving agenda items 7A and 7B concerning the Sustainable Neighborhoods Grant Terracycle 1.0 Report and Proposal for Terracycle 2.0 after public comment and before reports from commissioners, which was approved without objection.

4. **Approval of Minutes: September 10, 2024**

ACTION: The minutes were approved without objection.

5. **Public Comment**

None.

6. **Discussion of Topics Not the Subject of Resolutions**

- a. **Sustainable Neighborhoods Grant Report: Terracycle 1.0**

Ellee Spier reported on the Terracycle 1.0 pilot project, which was performed by GardenQuest. Spier thanked the Commission for providing the opportunity for residents to take action and test potential solutions to sustainability issues in Bloomington neighborhoods.

Key findings from Terracycle 1.0: Laminated paper products were the number one percentage of household trash diverted from landfills. Food wrappers were second, with solutions found through Kroger's free program and Terracycle. Kitchen, bathroom, and office waste were the next most popular.

Participants appreciated the accessibility of a neighborhood drop-off. Initially some households found the sorting system to be overwhelming, but that improved over time. Even when there were still some sorting issues, Terracycle has a forgiving system for mis-sorted items. Households did not have to be perfect to contribute meaningfully.

Participants learned a lot about what the City of Bloomington offers, and doesn't offer, when it comes to recycling.

Additional survey data collected: 7/10 said their households would switch to a smaller trash can if available. 6/10 said their household would switch to bi-weekly trash pickup if there was a cost reduction for it. 10/10 would like to continue if Terracycle 2.0 is funded. 9/10 said they would like to participate in a cost-sharing model if the cost meets their family's budget.

A discussion followed, with questions about where the waste is shipped (Illinois). There was also a discussion of a full carbon accounting including the fuel needed to ship the waste.

b. Sustainable Neighborhoods Grant Proposal: Terracycle 2.0

Ellee Spier presented the Terracycle 2.0 proposal, a hybrid approach testing a time-savings versus cost-savings model. The proposal has been approved by ESD. This proposal focuses on the use of most popular boxes from Terracycle 1.0: kitchen and snack boxes, as well as an all-in-one box.

Weight and volume data will continue to be collected.

MOTION: Matt Austin motioned and Zero Rose seconded to approve the Terracycle 2.0 grant proposal.

DISCUSSION: Jami Scholl expressed appreciation for looking at this through the lens of household size. Tara Dunderdale asked about additional programs, and whether data is collected about those. Any waste that can go into a free box somewhere does; only items that have no other option go into the Terracycle boxes. Hunter Hawley asked about how this could scale. Best practices could be shared with other neighborhoods that are interested in trying this.

ACTION: The motion to approve the grant received a roll call vote of Ayes: 8, Nays: 0, Abstain: 1. The motion passed.

7. Reports from Commissioners

a. Chair Report (Justin Vasel)

General Announcements: This is the last meeting of the year. No upcoming work sessions due to the holidays, but we will plan to pick them up again in the new year. Elections are coming up in March.

The org chart shows two vacant seats and four Commissioners with expiring terms as of January 31, 2025.

Shawn clarified that Indiana statute sets a limit of 90 days when continuing to serve in an expired seat before a reappointment decision is made by the appointing authority.

BCOS Document Repository: Everyone should now have read-only access to a Google Drive link. Shortly before the meeting, Commissioners received an email from City Attorney Larry Allen laying out the City's position that all document retention should

happen through OnBoard. There was a lot to consider in that email and we should address it at the next meeting once Commissioners have a chance to read and digest it.

Justin thanked everyone for a successful 2024 and looked forward to a productive 2025.

b. **Waste Management Working Group** (Matt Austin)

On December 19 from 3–4pm at the County courthouse, the board of directors for the Waste Reduction District of Monroe County is meeting to look at the RFP for all their recycling centers as to who they're going to choose. The choices are Rumpke and Republic.

It was noted that Rumpke sequesters methane out of their facility and recycles significantly more things, while Republic does not.

c. **Ad-Hoc Committee: Sustainability Assessment Report** (Tara Dunderdale)

Tara Dunderdale reported that the Committee is writing a first pass at the report, which will focus on energy and the built environment and looking at City code, City actions towards the goals in the Climate Action Plan, and the 2025 budget (as well as historic budgets).

Tara will try to organize a work session in the future to allow the team to work together as a group.

d. **Council Ex-Officio** (Dave Rollo)

Councilmember Rollo reported that there will be a vote on December 11 on the establishment of the Advisory Transportation Commission. Councilmembers Rollo and Ruff are offering an amendment that would reestablish Council oversight to have the final say in the traffic calming and greenways program implementation.

8. Discussion of Topics Not the Subject of Resolutions

a. **WG Grant Proposal: CanopyBloomington** (Andrew Guenther)

Justin noted that the proposal is finalized and tentatively approved by ESD, and is simply waiting on a final letter of support from one of the participants.

b. **WG Grant Proposal: Cob Bench (Evan Nix)**

Evan Nix presented the project, which aims to create a community hub with cob benches, an arbor, bike racks, native gardens, vegetable gardens, and fruit and berry plants. The project is in partnership with Redbud Books, located on Kirkwood Avenue. The goal is to provide a space for people to gather and relax using sustainable materials.

Mia from Redbud Books garnered support for the project, with over 20 signatures from neighbors and over 30 sign-ups from people willing to volunteer to build a bench.

The total project cost is estimated at \$1,200.90, with a request of \$1,000 from BCOS. Redbud Books is providing an in-kind donation of \$200, and Blue Bee Ecological Endeavors will donate plants, soil, and seeds.

The benches will be built from cob, using clay sourced from the site, reclaimed limestone for the foundation, and sand from Home Depot. Daniel Weddle, Chief Design Officer of Terran Robotics, will certify the arbor's construction.

The project aligns with Bloomington's sustainability goals, including transportation and land use, water conservation, local food and agriculture, waste reduction, and ecosystem health.

ESD has approved this proposal.

MOTION: Jami Scholl moved, and Hunter Hawley seconded to approve \$1,000 in working group grant funds to the cob bench project.

DISCUSSION: Questions arose regarding permits, structural considerations, and the potential impact on the foundation of the building. It was clarified that the property owner is aware of the plans. There were further questions about whether a structural engineer had assessed the project, given accessibility and floor warping issues at Redbud Books. Additional concerns included whether underground utility lines were present, who assumes liability for the project, what would happen if the site proved to be unsuitable, and project timeline. The project is expected to be completed in the spring, with a community build planned around Redbud's anniversary in March.

ACTION: The motion to approve the grant received a roll call vote of Ayes: 8, Nays: 0, Abstain: 1. The motion passed.

9. Resolutions for Second Reading and Discussion: None

10. Resolutions for First Reading and Discussion

a. Resolution 2024-01: Support for Proposed Changes to BMC § 2.12.100

The Commission reviewed proposed changes to Bloomington Municipal Code (BMC) § 2.12.100 regarding BCOS definition, powers, and duties. The Commission wanted to incorporate the concept of resiliency into the definition of sustainability in that language and specify that BCOS is to advise and make recommendations to the City administration more broadly, and not just to the mayor specifically.

MOTION: Hunter Hawley moved, and Tara Dunderdale seconded to adopt Resolution 2024-01.

SECONDARY MOTION: Jami Scholl moved, and Zero Rose seconded to amend Section 1 of Resolution 2024-01 in the following way:

*"...that no single commission could address in isolation. **Additionally, BCOS is the only board or commission that is tasked with integrating the local food system into its oversight and recommendations.** BCOS's ability to integrate..."*

DISCUSSION: Jami Scholl stated that the reason for the amendment is that the Bloomington Food Policy Council no longer functions in that capacity, which leaves BCOS as the sole Commission who has food security or sovereignty as part of its purview. She emphasized that this would distinguish BCOS apart from the Environmental Commission in future discussions of their differences.

Tara Dunderdale pointed out that there are other areas where BCOS has unique purview, and that referencing this topic in the resolution might be getting too far in the weeds on one particular issue. Justin Vasel pointed out that the purpose of the section was to formally respond to the findings of the Novak report which suggested merging BCOS and the Environmental Commission; it was not meant to enumerate all areas where BCOS might have a singular focus.

ACTION: The motion to amend Section 1 of Resolution 2024-01 received a roll call vote of Ayes: 4 , Nays: 2 , Abstain: 3. The motion failed.

ACTION: The motion to adopt Resolution 2014-01 received a roll call vote of Ayes: 9, Nays: 0, Abstain: 0. The motion passed.

11. Report from Staff Liaison (Shawn Miya)

- a. Shawn encouraged everyone to attend the IU ERI Indiana Sustainability and Resilience Conference on Fri Feb 28 at the Convention Center.
- b. ESD has been working hard to update the sustainability website, which will be updated in January to reflect 2024 updates.

12. Adjournment:

ACTION: The meeting was adjourned without objection at 7:30pm.

NEXT MEETING:
JANUARY 14, 2025 6PM